

Caring for Creation through the Liturgical Year



DATE	EVENT OR SEASON	TRADITIONAL THEME	CREATION CARE THEME	RESOURCES
	ADVENT	Looking ahead to the advent (arrival) of Christ and anticipating His second coming	Anticipating the arrival of the Son of God, and longing for the revealing of the sons of God needed to 'liberate Creation from its bondage to decay' (Rom 8:19-21)	'Sustainable Preaching' has an archive of 'green' sermons for Sunday lectionary readings over the years: http://sustainable-preaching.org/sermon-suggestions/ A Creation Care Order for Night Prayer: https://creationtide.files.wordpress.com/2018/07/5-order-for-night-prayer-11.pdf Some Creation Care Eucharistic prayers and prefaces: https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/churchs-year/times-and-seasons/agricultural-year#mmm340
	1	The Patriarchs	Taking a wider view of the Patriarchs as ancestor figures from Adam to Abraham, we include Noah, the first Biodiversity Conservationist. Also, the first biblical covenant (made before the covenant with Abraham) which is established between God, all Creation, and humanity together.	For a reflection on Noah as the first conservationist: https://arocha.org.uk/resources/environment-resource-packs/
	2	The Prophets	There is a clear creation care theme in many of the prophets' writings. Isaiah talks of humanity breaking the first ('everlasting') covenant and consequently the earth suffering (Isa 24:5, cf Hag 1:9-11). Jeremiah talks of the earth mourning human sinfulness and neglect (Jer 12:4). A new re-creation is anticipated where Earth is restored to its state of original blessing and fruitfulness (Isa 65:17-25; Hosea 2:21-22) through the actions of the Messiah (Isa 11:1-9).	
	3	John the Baptist	John the Baptist comes from the wilderness, a place where God's presence is felt and voice is heard. Seeing wilderness as a place of spiritual renewal speaks of a need to protect it, and possibly 're-wild' areas.	

	4	The Virgin Mary	Mary offers the pre-eminent example of submission to God's call and will bringing forth the new creation. Mary is also the mother of our Lord, yet also a fellow disciple of Christ, like us. This parallels with St Francis' conception of 'our sister mother earth' in the Canticle of the Creatures: Earth our 'mother' giving us physical birth (under the guidance of God's Spirit), but also the Earth as our sister in Christ, a fellow creature and pilgrim, alike in need of redemption and liberation, which depends on our response to Christ (see 'Mothering Sunday' below).	
25 th December	CHRISTMAS DAY	The birth of our Lord, The fulfilment of prophecies, the Good News of the Messiah bringing redemption.	The prophets longed for a day when the Messiah would restore peace between humanity and the natural world (Isa 1:1-9), re-uniting heaven and earth, and this day arrives at Christmas.	'Green tips for Christmas' parish magazine article: https://greenchristian.org.uk/green-tips-for-christmas-by-barbara-echlin/
28 th December	HOLY INNOCENTS / DAY OF PRAYER FOR REFUGEES	Remembering the Holy Family's escape to Egypt	Remembering the increase in 'Climate' and environmental refugees, and our obligation to care for those seeking sanctuary from harm.	
1 st Sunday of Epiphany	PLOUGH SUNDAY	Blessing upon ploughing and the preparation of ground ahead of sowing the year's crops	A time to pray for the environmentally-sustainable preparation of the ground for sowing, whether through ploughing or other methods, and for farmers to develop the necessary skills for our time, to protect the integrity of soils.	The Arthur Rank Centre: https://arthurrankcentre.org.uk/?sfid=226&_sft_category=church-life&_sft_themes=Worship&_sft_post_tag=plough-sunday C of E Times and Seasons resources: https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/churchs-year/times-and-seasons-4#mmm352
	2ND SUNDAY IN LENT: CREATION SUNDAY	Celebrating God's gift in Creation	Rejoicing in God's gift of a 'good' creation, recognising humanity's place alongside/within creation (Adam from <i>adamah</i> , human from <i>humus</i>), though with a responsibility of care ('to till and keep').	The 'Climate Sunday' website has lots of suitable worship resources https://www.climatesunday.org/
1 st March	ST DAVID'S DAY	Celebrating the Patron Saint of Wales	The patron saint of vegetarians and vegans. Exploring the need for changed diets in a changing world, and a reduced meat consumption so that all may be able to eat and flourish.	

Lent	LENT	Penitence and abstinence	Lent provides an ideal opportunity to rebuild our relationship with God the Creator, God's earth, our home, and Christ through whom all things have been created. The ancient Christian tradition of living simply during Lent fits closely with the needs of our planet. For us to restrain from greed, and to trust in, and delight in, God's provision. Lent is a time where habits of prayer and living at peace with creation (Mk 1:13) are rediscovered, and habits are formed to sustain us through the year ahead.	Some free Lent courses: 'Climate change and the purposes of God' from 'Operation Noah': https://operationnoah.org/resources/lent-course-climate-change-purposes-god/ The "Planetwise" bible study from 'A Rocha': https://atyourservice.arocha.org/en/planetwise-2008-resource-pack-bible-studies/
Lent 2	'FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT' BEGINS		A time to recognise the links between social justice and caring for creation: global warming mostly impacts the world's poorest first. 'Fairtrade' helps build resilience, both environmental and economic.	Fairtrade Fortnight Foundation web pages: https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get-involved/current-campaigns/fairtrade-fortnight/
Lent 4	MOTHERING SUNDAY	Giving thanks for 'Mother Church', or increasingly for mothers	Could use the day to thank God for 'our sister mother Earth' as St Francis puts it in 'Canticle of the Creatures'. Earth our 'mother' gives us physical birth (under the guidance of God's Spirit), but also Earth is our sister in Christ, a fellow creature and pilgrim, in need of redemption and liberation, depending on our response to Christ.	
19 th March	JOSEPH OF NAZARETH	Jesus' father	Give thanks for those called to work with the fruits of Creation, shaping them to serve human (not greed's) needs in ways that do not despoil.	
22 nd March	WORLD WATER DAY			
	GOOD FRIDAY	Human sin causing the suffering and Crucifixion of Christ	Human sin causing the suffering and crippling of Creation	
	EASTER SUNDAY	Resurrection of Christ and atonement with God and liberation from death for humanity	Celebrating both the resurrection of Christ and first fruits of a restored Creation, and an atonement between humanity and creation as much as humanity and God.	
22 nd April	'EARTH DAY'	International day of support for environmental protection	(The Paris climate accord was signed on this day.) A day to remember God's call to stewardship of the earth, to 'till and to keep', or 'serve and preserve' creation (Gen 2:15).	A simple service of the word celebrating Creation: https://arcentre.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/11124302/An-environmental-service.pdf

Easter 6	ROGATION SUNDAY	Prayer for protection of crops. Also, protection of boundaries, but encouraging fellowship with neighbours. The 'beating of the bounds'	Walking and rediscovering the parish as tract of land full of God's creatures as well as a collection of people; meeting neighbours at the boundaries, encouraging neighbourliness between communities and nations.	C of E Times and Seasons: https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/churchs-year/times-and-seasons-4#mmm359 The Arthur Rank Centre: https://arthurrankcentre.org.uk/?sfid=226&_sft_category=church-life&_sft_themes=Worship&_sft_post_tag=rogation
	PENTECOST	The arrival/accessibility of God's Spirit to those with faith in Christ	Recognising and rejoicing that the Spirit of God that fashions and sustains creation is same spirit of love that animates the church. Sustaining the Church and sustaining Creation are different aspects of the same work of God's love.	
Thursday after Trinity Sunday	CORPUS CHRISTI (THANKSGIVING FOR HOLY COMMUNION)	Thanksgiving for the gift of the Eucharist, and the presence of Christ in/through the sacrament	A day to remember that Christ embodies a right relationship between God, creation and humanity; and the Eucharist extends to us the possibility of our participation in that. Celebrating the Eucharist is the occasion where God's gifts in creation, the work of human hands, and the presence of Christ unite in the new creation of the Kingdom, as a foretaste (first fruits) of that to come and as the means of grace and renewal to get there.	
	COVENANT SUNDAY (TRINITY 1)		Remembering and celebrating God's first covenant of everlasting care (established before the Abrahamic covenant) made with humanity and all creation (Gen 9:8-17), but a covenant broken by humanity to the detriment of all (Isa 24:5-6).	
1 st June	WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY AND WORLD REFUGEE DAY		A day of prayer for Creation: of thanksgiving, of repentance for harm, and for grace to heal. Also a day to pray for increasing number 'climate refugees' as people become displaced through the effects of climate change (see also 28 th December).	
2 nd Sunday in July	SEA SUNDAY	Thanks for gifts of the ocean, and prayers for those working the seas	A day to pray for the protection of marine environments, that thy may continue to reflect and communicate the Creator's love. Also a day to remember the 'ecosystem services' given by the ocean: the carbon capture by algae and dissolved CO ₂ ; the food from the sea, the oceans' currents circulating and sharing nutrients the sun's energy.	

1 st August	LAMMASTIDE	Lammas or 'Loaf-mass': thanksgiving for first fruits of wheat harvest	A time to offer thanksgiving for the 'first fruits' we receive all year round from different parts of the globe. Or, a day to celebrate 'seasonality', and our need to live within natural rhythms of growth and harvest to reduce food miles.	C of E 'Times and Seasons': https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/churchs-year/times-and-seasons-4#mmm372
1 st September to 4 th October	SEASON OF CREATION	A season to help us renew and re-evaluate our relationship with our Creator and all creation through repenting, repairing, and rejoicing together	The season begins on 1 st September, a World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation (established by Pope Francis). It ends on 4 th October, the Feast of St Francis in Roman Catholic tradition the patron saint of Ecology (see below). Each year has a specific theme, and resources are produced which use the lectionary readings set for each Sunday and draw out from them a relevant creation care theme.	https://seasonofcreation.org/
14 th Septemb	HOLY CROSS	The cross as sign of salvation for humanity	A day to celebrate the cross as sign of salvation for all creation, as in 1 Col:20: 'through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.'	
4 th September	ST FRANCIS	Francis the joyful ascetic, lover of animals, founder of Franciscan orders	Francis the patron saint of ecology, recognizing in creation (plants, animals, celestial bodies, and forces of nature) fellow pilgrims, and brothers and sisters in Christ. By this Francis was instrumental in reclaiming nature for Christ by ridding the created order of any vestigial nature-worship left from Paganism.	Reflection on St Francis from Christian Aid: https://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/churches/weekly-worship-sunday-6-october
17 th to 24 th October	ONE WORLD WEEK	Working for global justice and earth care (centered around the anniversary of the United Nations' establishment)	The week is organised by a Partnership of NGOs and faith groups working for global justice and Earth care, centered around the anniversary of establishment of United nations on 24 th October.	
24 th October	BIBLE SUNDAY	Thanksgiving for the Scriptures	A day to celebrate the Bible as a resource book as well as a source book, with continued relevance to our current predicament of environmental destruction through the flourishing of eco theology.	Article in the Church Times: Eco-theology is not new: it's foundational to faith https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2013/13-september/comment/opinion/eco-theology-is-not-new-it-s-foundational-to-faith
	KINGDOM SEASON	Human hearts subject to rule of Christ / anticipating full arrival of God's Kingdom	A season to remember in Christ's Kingdom creation is rehabilitated to its original goodness, beauty and fecundity.	